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Message Text

SECRET

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14-11
ACTION SS-25

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R 051040Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9245
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

S E C R E T RANGOON 0575

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, BM
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS - NEW SHAN PROPOSAL

REF: (A) BANGKOK 3403 (B) STATE 40599 (C) RANGOON 329

1. RANGOON, BANGKOK, AND DEPARTMENT APPEAR TO BE IN BASIC AGREEMENT THAT A PROPOSAL FROM AN ALLIANCE OF TRAFFICKERS WHO CONTROL A MAJOR PART OF THE SHAN STATE CROP SHOULD BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED IF REPEAT IF IT COULD PLAUSIBLY BE REPRESENTED TO THE GUB AS A POSSIBLE BASIS FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT BETWEEN GUB AND THE DISSIDENT GROUPS. UNFORTUNATELY THE PROPOSAL TRANSMITTED REF B IS NOT, AS CONGRESSMAN WOLFF APPARENTLY RECOGNIZES, ONE WHICH CAN BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AT PRESENT.

2. NOT ONLY IS THE CURRENT SHAN PROPOSAL LACKING IN PRECISION; IT ALSO SETS AS A NECESSARY PRECONDITION SHAN STATE SECESSION FROM BURMA. NO BURMESE GOVERNMENT, CERTAINLY NOT THE PRESENT ONE, COULD CONSIDER ANY SUCH PLAN EVEN AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION, NOR COULD I EVEN DESCRIBE SUCH A PROPOSAL TO GUB WITHOUT AT SAME TIME MAKING IT CLEAR THAT THE USG ALSO REGARDS IT AS UNACCEPTABLE. THE NEXT STEP, THEREFORE, WOULD SEEM TO BE FOR CONGRESSMAN WOLFF TO SEEK TO ELICIT MORE PRECISE AND DETAILED INFORMATION FROM THE SHANS, ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED REFS A AND C, AND TO GET THEM TO REVISE THEIR PROPOSALS ALONG LINES MORE LIKELY TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE GUB--I.E., BY DROPPING THEIR INSISTENCE ON SHAN INDEPENDENCE.

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3. AT SAME TIME, IT STILL APPEARS TO ME IMPORTANT THAT WE INFORM GUB OF THE NEWEST SHAN PROPOSAL, MAKING CLEAR OUR LACK OF INTEREST IN IT AS IT STANDS, AND THAT WE DO SO PROMPTLY. I SYMPATHIZE WITH CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S INSTINCT TO PROTECT HIS CONTACTS, BUT COWELL'S ACTIVITIES IN BANGKOK ARE WELL-KNOWN AND IT IS A NEAR CERTAINTY THAT GUB WILL SHORTLY LEARN OF THEM IF IT HAS NOT ALREADY DONE SO. WHAT IT MAY NOT KNOW THE FACTS, BUT SUSPECT THE WORST, ABOUT IS THE USG ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PROPOSAL. WE MUST BE QUITE FRANK WITH GUB ABOUT THE PROPOSAL IN ORDER TO PRESERVE OUR MINIMAL CREDIBILITY WITH THE BURMESE. CREDIBILITY IN THIS REGARD WILL BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THE SHANS COME UP WITH ANYTHING WHICH COULD PROVIDE A BASIS FOR SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION WITH GUB.

4. ONE CONSIDERATION BEARING ON TIMING IS THE POSSIBLE VISIT TO RANGOON LATER THIS MONTH BY AMBASSADOR VANCE (SEPTEL). IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF THE ATMOSPHERE FOR THAT VISIT WERE SOURED BY UNRESOLVED GUB SUSPICIONS OF THE USG ATTITUDE TOWARD SHAN EFFORTS TO ENLIST OUR SUPPORT FOR SHAN STATE SECESSION.

5. WE ALSO FAVOR EMBASSY BANGKOK BRIEFING GENERAL KRIANGSAK AS SUGGESTED REF A. OUR GUESS IS THAT KRIANGSAK TOO IS AWARE OF PROPOSAL. JUST AFTER KRIANGSAK'S RETURN FROM VISIT TO BURMA, NOW IN PROCESS, WOULD BE BEST TIME; KRIANGSAK MAY HAVE BETTER FEELING FOR GUB'S ATTITUDES AND RESPONSE TO THIS PROPOSAL AND OTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH DISSIDENTS.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: I URGE THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO INFORM GUB AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE OF SUBSTANCE OF SHAN PROPOSAL, AND OF THE CATEGORICAL USG REJECTION OF ANY PROPOSAL DETRIMENTAL TO TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF BURMA.
OSBORN

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